

Amherst Recycling & Refuse Management Committee  
**Meeting Minutes • July 10, 2014, 4:30 PM**  
DPW Conference Room

Attending:

Susan Morrello, Arnie Alper, John Root, Brenda Kennedy, Susan Waite

The meeting was called to order at 4:40 PM.

Minutes from 6/5/2014 meeting were approved unanimously after minor edits.

**Taste of Amherst Review & Closure**

Cam Weimar of Amend Organics was pleased with the low contamination levels of the contents of the compost bins and the amount (approximately six tons) of compostables collected, and commended the work of volunteers and organizers. Susan Morrello will write a letter to the editor of the Amherst Bulletin on behalf of the Committee regarding the waste tonnage diverted.

Several restaurants did not comply with the compostable disposable requirement, which was due in part to the participation of a number of new restaurants. Non-compliance made the volunteer job more complicated and was the cause of annoyance for some Taste participants. This needs to be addressed to avoid a repeat of these problems next year. The solution needs to be as simple as possible for participating restaurants, the Taste organizing committee, and discard tent volunteers.

Both Taste participants and volunteers were confused about what to do with straws and various utensils, ice cream cups, soup cups, drink cups and condiment cups.

Two solutions were discussed:

1) Provide better education to participating restaurants BEFORE the event. This could take the form of an actual visit from a RRMCM member or a handout with pictures of acceptable and unacceptable products for the event and/or a list of acceptable products. Some well-meaning restaurants were duped by manufacturers who sold more expensive products labeled “Environmentally friendly” or “bio-degradable” which are not compostable. There is a useful handout available online produced by EcoCycle of Colorado that explains how to tell if products are truly compostable.

2) Purchase all (or most troublesome) serving materials for vendors and add the cost to the participation fee. This will increase workload for Taste organizers, and someone will need to administer the program and organize and monitor the “stock.”

The two-tent arrangement (with two volunteers per tent plus a floater) worked well, but the tent closest to the stage was not very busy and unattended cans near yellow house and next to porta-potties were often overflowing and full of compostable material (food, hand towels, etc.). Suggestion was to move second manned tent closer to stage (at northern end of western-most food tent line) and set up two unmanned full stations: one each at the two porta-potty areas. The floater could check the two stations periodically as (s)he does with the station in the beer and wine tent. During busy times a volunteer from the tent near the stage could assist with floater tasks (Arnie reported that the floater position was very busy on Saturday between 6 and 10 PM). The unmanned stations could have special signs indicating where paper towels (compost) and diapers (trash) should go.

This year, Committee members initiated cardboard collection. A collection area was arranged for, as well as a dry storage area, in the event of rain. Arnie and his wife, Reed Mangels, made sure that collected cardboard was broken down, and Sue Morrello took it to the Transfer Station. The Committee would like to collect cardboard again in 2015, but a better, more organized process is needed with the following assigned responsibilities: 1) education of restaurant owners; 2) identification of convenient drop location and dry storage; 3) periodic review of area (make sure that cardboard gets to dry storage if rain is imminent) and that boxes are broken down; and 4) collection of material and delivery to Transfer Station. It also needs to be made very clear to restaurant owners that they are expected to take the trash produced inside their booth back to their restaurants.

### **Morphing the Committee's vision for Amherst into a five year plan**

Five of eight people (counting Susan W.) submitted their visions for solid waste as requested prior to the meeting. There were commonalities among the statements.

John, Susan and Craig met with Guilford on June 20 to discuss the possibility of applying for a MassDEP Technical Assistance Grant to engage the services of Arlene Miller (the Western Massachusetts Municipal Assistance Coordinator) to help create and institute a plan for solid waste disposal in Amherst in the years to come. Guilford gave his approval for Susan to apply for the grant, which must be submitted by August 28.

Guilford indicated at the meeting that he would like a 5-10 year solid waste "master plan" from the Committee. There is urgency around this given an unexpected shortfall in the FY2014 budget. Committee members were not clear on what is being requested. Susan agreed to meet with Guilford to clarify what he would like to be included in a master plan. Arlene may be of assistance if the grant for engaging her services is awarded.

The Committee did not have time to pursue working group updates or new business topics.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:40 PM.

Respectfully submitted by Susan Waite